

Cornish Miner's House, No. 1.
Mineral Point, Wisconsin.

Iowa Co.

HABS No. 28-17.

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Photographs,
Written Historical and Descriptive Data.
District No. 28.

Historic American Buildings Survey.
Alexander C. Gulik, District Officer.
1249 N. Franklin Place, Milwaukee, Wis.

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CORNISH MINER'S HOUSE [NO. I.]
Mineral Point, Iowa Co.
Wisconsin

Owner: Not given.

Date of Erection: About 1828.

Architect and Builder: No record.

Present Condition: Poor,

Number of Stories: Two.

Materials of Construction: Stone.

Other Existing Records: None.

Additional Data: See following pages.

A CORNISH MINER'S HOUSE

In the boom days when the zinc mines were in full operation, the city of Mineral Point, Wisconsin, was a city of approximately 4800 inhabitants. Today it has shrunk to a bare 3000 due to the closing up of the mines. It is a vicinity of poor farms because of the immense and varied rock formations which crop up out of the earth at every turn. These rocks have been quarried and used in the construction of the majority of buildings of the city. It is a stone of a yellowish cast which wears well and weathers beautifully. In the city are to be found a railroad station, a bank, churches, business blocks and residences without number all built of this same material as well as the Cornish miners' houses. These latter houses are to be found principally in one section of the city, namely, the old part. Most of them are situated on Shakerag alley.

As the drawings indicate, they are modest with but two rooms on a floor. Each has a fireplace in the principal room. Closets, bath rooms and basements are unheard of. The substitute for the latter are to be found in the shape of cellars dug out of the solid rock immediately in back of the houses. This indicates that the houses are situated on a sloping hillside which is very often the case.

These houses bear close inspection. They date from the year 1828 or immediately thereafter. The walls are

in the majority of cases 20" thick. The windows are placed ~~near~~ the outside face of the wall, ~~which means there are making~~ deep window reveals. These are splayed and constructed of wood. The floors are of pine boards of varied widths. The joists and timbers are of logs or saplings evened on one side to receive the boarding. Laths are of the handcut type and generally of oak. The casings and other trim is of a very primitive type. The stairways in most cases have open risers and no handrails, just a type of ladder.

The stone work on the outside is the chief charm of these houses. Usually on the front or important elevation the stone is coursed in units of about 15" high. The side and rear walls are constructed of similar stone but laid up in random ashlar. The stone at the side and rear walls are of a rough surface and appears as though it was used as it came from the quarry. That on the front has a tooled surface, worn and weathered ~~after all these many number of years~~ since the houses were built. The roofs were originally covered with wood shingles, but these have been replaced with a prepared roofing paper which adds color and zest to the buildings. In many instances the windows were equipped with blinds, but these have mostly disappeared.

Investigation has brought out the fact that some of these houses are still occupied by the descendants of the original Cornish miners. Many of the houses are in splendid state of preservation and occupied, while others again are
HOPELESS DERELICTS.

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hopeless derelicts.

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Reviewed by H.C.F., 1936.

Alvander C. Both
District Officer.